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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR  
WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/STEINGER; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [KHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW HAR HOMA HOUSING UNITS PART OF "VERY OLD PLAN"

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The construction of 1000 new housing units in Har Homa southeast of Jerusalem, announced January 8, are part of an existing plan and are not the result of the cancellation of the "Safdie plan" to build 20,000 housing units in the hills west of Jerusalem, according to both the Foreign Relations Coordinator for the Jerusalem Mayor's office and the head of Israeli human rights NGO Ir Amim. End summary.

¶2. (C) Israeli newspapers announced January 9 plans by the Jerusalem Municipality to build an additional 1000 housing units in Har Homa. Israeli newspaper Yediot Ha'aharonot quoted a spokesman for Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski as saying the planned construction was an alternative to the "Safdie plan." (Note: The "Safdie plan" would have included the construction of 20,000 housing units in the hills west of Jerusalem, but environmental activists said the construction would cause irreparable environmental damage, and right-wing activists suggested that westward expansion was to avoid construction in E-1. Lupolianski's office officially suspended the "Safdie plan" in late December 2006. End note). Michal Sharvit, Foreign Relations Coordinator for the Mayor's office, however, told poloff January 17 that the two plans are not related. She said expansion of Har Homa is part of a "very old plan," and that the Municipality could not have come up with an alternative to the "Safdie plan" this quickly. Sharvit said that there is no decision on an alternative to the "Safdie plan," but the Mayor's office is exploring possibilities within the city center for additional construction.

¶3. (C) Danny Seidemann, founder of the Israeli human rights NGO Ir Amim, confirmed that the planned construction at Har Homa is far older than the decision to cancel the "Safdie plan." Seidemann told poloff January 12 that the "master plan" for Har Homa, allowing for the construction of 6500 residential units, was approved in 1997. The Master Plan called for the building of Har Homa in three stages, Har Homa A, B and C, each with its own specific plan. Har Homa A consisted of a plan for 2400 units, most of which have been completed and are occupied. Har Homa B consisted of 2000 units, and these units have been marketed and construction of infrastructure has begun. According to Seidemann, the 1000 units announced January 8 are the first installment of the remaining 2100 units that make up Har Homa C, and these units will be constructed to the southeast of the existing units.

WALLES